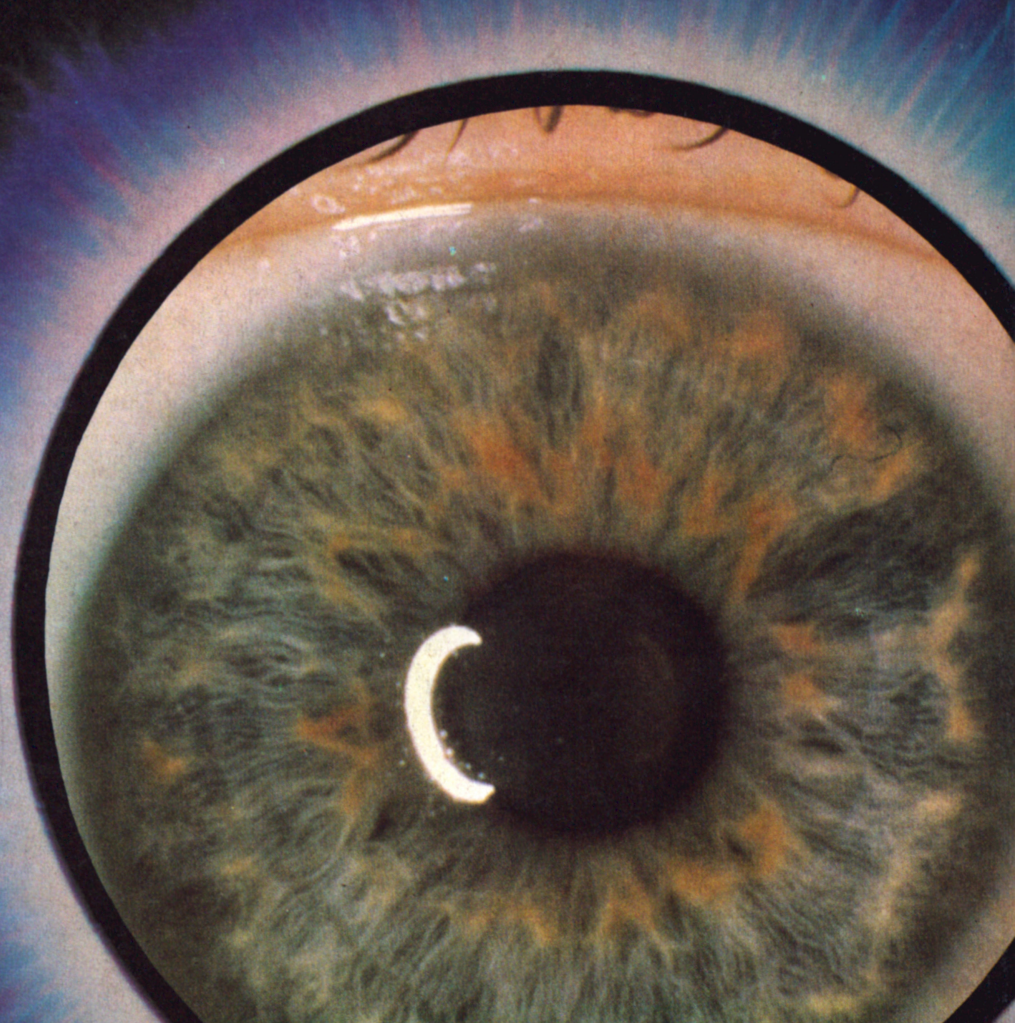
65p

THE Unexplained

MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

Meaning of colour
Mazes: the inside story
The way of Subud
Freud and psi
Iridology

148



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THE Unexplained
MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

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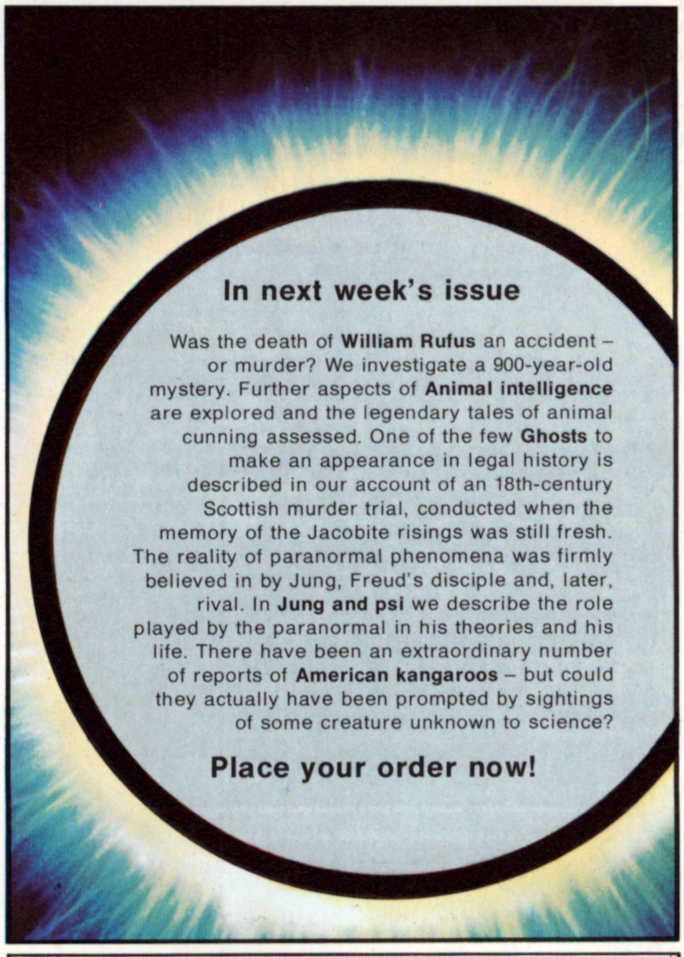
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Beyond the rainbow

From ancient times colour has been imbued with symbolic, magical and mystical significance, making it a powerful secret language that was used in sacred and secular codes. HILDI HAWKINS investigates the potent meanings inherent in the colour spectrum

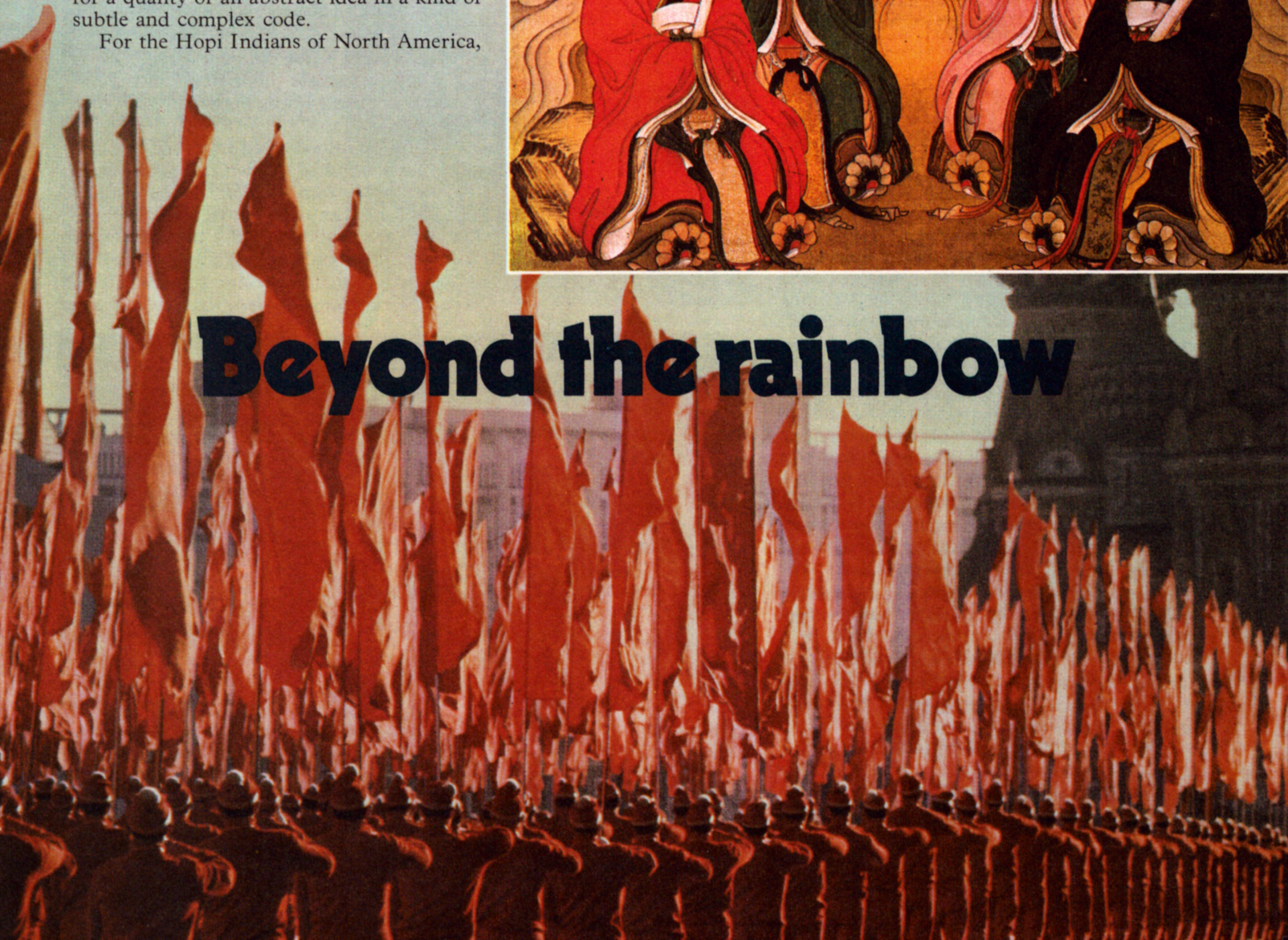
COLOUR IS an important element in our environment. It is all around us in the natural landscape – and we use it to decorate ourselves, our clothes, and the buildings in which we live and work. Today choice of colour is largely an aesthetic consideration. But not entirely – superstitions about colour still abound. There are people who are afraid of yellow in theatres; brides wear something blue for luck; people give yellow roses as a sign of constancy, or avoid giving people in hospital red and white flowers, fearing that this might bring them bad luck. The English language is peppered with references to colour: we speak of being green with envy, browned off, having the blues, red-letter days, black looks, and so on.

These are relics of a time when choice of colour was not merely aesthetic: it was mystical and symbolic, with each colour standing for a quality or an abstract idea in a kind of subtle and complex code.

For the Hopi Indians of North America, for instance, each cardinal point of the compass was represented by a different colour – north was yellow, west was green or blue, south was red and east was white. And even today, the Hopi artist begins his painting by making these four coloured marks, in order. Other cultures had similar colour associations with the points of the compass. Among the Mongolians of Tibet, the world was believed to be a high mountain shaped like a four-sided pyramid. The sides facing the four points of the compass were coloured, and shone like jewels. The north side was yellow, the south side blue, the east white, and the west red. The people in the south had oval faces; those in the north square faces; those in the west rounded faces, and those in the east had crescent-shaped faces.

Around the world, the idea of assigning

In Chinese mythology the coloured robes of the four kings of hell (below) corresponded to the colours assigned to the four quarters of the Earth: black for north, red for south, green for east and white for west. In the European tradition, red is associated with blood, war and revolution – a symbolism dramatically illustrated in the banners and uniforms of a May Day march in Moscow's Red Square (bottom)



Now comes the rustle of Enthusiasms joy
Who shall I call? Who shall I send?
That Woman, lovely Woman! may have dominion:
Arise O Rintrah thee I call! & Palamabron thee!
Go! tell the human race that Womans love is Sin!
That an Eternal life awaits the worms of sixty winters
In an allegorical abode where existence hath never come:
Forbid all Joy, & from her childhood shall the little female
Spread nets in every secret path.
My weary eyelids draw towards the evening, my bliss is yet but new!
Arise

colours to the points of the compass occurs again and again. For the Chinese, the north was represented by a god with a black face, the south by one with a red face, the east by green, and the west by white. The ancient Irish assigned black to the north, white to the south, purple to the east, and dun colour to the west. The Navajo Indians of North America believed that they lived in a land surrounded by high mountains, the rise and fall of which caused night and day. The northern mountains were black, the southern blue, the eastern white and the western yellow.

Clearly, colours do not always have the same associations in different cultures. On the other hand, it has been established that certain colours have specific physiological effects. In 1900 Charles Féré (see page 490), a scientist working in Paris, published the results of experiments that showed that both muscular power and blood circulation increased when the subject was exposed to coloured light – to a small extent by blue, more by green, yellow and orange, and most of all by red light.

Within Europe, experiments conducted by B. J. Kouwer have demonstrated that people react to colours in accordance with their traditional significance. In his book *Colours and their character* (1949), Kouwer reported that his subjects associated red with passion, emotion, temperament, action, rebellion, force and sexuality. And his finding seems to be borne out by the way in which red is used symbolically in Europe.

The word for red in English, French, German and Latin comes from the same root as the word for blood. From blood, too, comes the association with bloodshed and the warlike 'red' planet, Mars. Romans apparently regarded the colour red as a call to arms; and victorious generals riding in triumph through the streets of Rome had their faces painted red. In Irish legend the fiercest warriors were the Red Branch, the guards of Conchobar mac Nessa, who was King of Ulster in the first century AD. Red is the colour of revolution: the French revolutionaries of the 18th century wore red caps, and Garibaldi's legions wore red shirts. But perhaps the most explicit example of red as a symbol of war, revolution and martyrdom is the Soviet red flag, described in the Socialist hymn, *The Internationale*:

> The people's flag is deepest red
> Within its shade the martyrs bled
> And ere their limbs grew stiff and cold
> Their life-blood dyed its every fold.

The association of red with sexuality stems perhaps both from the fact that exposure to the colour stimulates muscular reactions, and from the traditional link, in the Christian Church, with sin – 'though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow' (Isaiah 1: 18). There is also a tradition that red is the

In the Bible blue is often associated with God and heaven: the robe of the Virgin Mary is traditionally blue, as in Giovanni Bellini's painting of the *Virgin and child* (left). Yellow is the colour of the Sun and of gold, and represents perfection and glory. In ancient China it was associated with imperial splendour, and was a sacred colour – and today Buddhist monks (below) wear saffron robes to indicate spirituality

In the Christian tradition black is associated with death, darkness and evil, white with life, light and righteousness – a symbology used in William Blake's illustration (left) of the Devil with angels, in *Visions of the daughters of Albion* (1793). The white clothes of children dressed for their first communion (below left) symbolise both their innocence and their hope of eternal life

colour of witchcraft, and Irish witches were said to wear little red caps. But wherever the symbolism originates, red is the colour of sexuality and the harlot – and to this day, all over the world, brothels are marked by a red light.

In the Christian Church, red has a curious double meaning, for it is the symbol of divine love and religious zeal as well as of sin. It is for this reason that the Pope wears red when listening to mass, and that the robes of cardinals are red. Kouwer's observation that red is associated with force is reflected in its use, in many societies, as a symbol of royalty. Today we still speak of 'rolling out the red carpet' for important visitors.

Compared with the complex symbolism of red, black has a simpler connotation that is perhaps more widespread than that of any other colour. It is universally linked with night, darkness and, by extension, with death and evil. Black magic is evil magic, the black sheep of the family is the person who disgraces himself, a black day is one of disaster, and black clothing denotes mourning. The Devil often appears as a black creature, as in the 'black dog' stories of south-east England (see page 1710), or as a dark-complexioned man dressed in black.

The contrast between black and white is basic to European colour symbolism. The Devil and his legions are black, whereas the angels and the souls of the righteous in heaven are clothed in the purest white. But like red, white has an ambivalent significance. It represents purity, light, peace, virginity and innocence – but it also stands for weakness and cowardice, as in the white flag, banner of defeat, and the white feather, symbol of cowardice. Brides are married in white as a sign of their virginity. In church the black altar hangings of Good Friday are replaced with the white of Easter, symbolising death, sin and misery followed by resurrection, redemption and joy.

Black and white are generally opposites in colour symbolism. And yet sometimes their associations coincide. Black is the symbol of death – and the traditional flower of death is the white lily. The departing soul is traditionally thought to take the form of a white bird. And in Europe, until the late medieval period, the colour of mourning was white – as it is in China today – not black.

Echoing green

Green has a complex symbolism linked to nature and fertility – the words 'green' and 'grow' come from the same root. Much of green's symbology is associated with ancient fertility rites – such as the Jack-in-the-Green ceremonies (see page 1245) – and with the world of faerie (see page 1241). In the Christian Church green signifies the hope of eternal life, perhaps derived from evergreen plants which, remaining green throughout the year, carry the hope of summer through the winter months. Green is also, obscurely, popularly the colour of envy. According to an old Scottish custom, a girl who marries before her older sisters gives them green garters. Like most of the customs that seem to connect green with envy, however, this one can also be read as a fertility ritual.

Blue has fewer symbolic associations. In the Bible it is often associated with God; it is the colour of the robe of the Virgin Mary, perhaps because she is regarded as the queen of heaven. Blue is also connected with royalty and the aristocracy ('blue blood') and with Conservatism in Britain ('true-blue'). It is also often associated with perseverance, trustworthiness and similar virtues. In the United States flag, red stands for courage, white for purity and blue for vigilance.

Yellow is another colour with a fascinating dual significance. It is the colour of the Sun and of gold, and represents perfection, wealth, glory and power. But it is also the colour of vindictiveness, jealousy, hate and

In European folklore green was a magic colour, prominent in fertility rituals. A recurrent mythological figure was the 'green man' (left, in an illustration of a German miracle play), who embodied the forces of nature

Further reading
Rudolf Arnheim, *Art and visual perception*, University of California Press (Berkeley) 1974
Faber Birren, *Color psychology and color therapy*, Citadel Press (Secaucus) 1978

mendacity: in the medieval period people attending church on Good Friday wore saffron-yellow robes to signify the Jews' hatred that led them to kill Christ. In many medieval paintings of the betrayal of Christ, Judas is represented with reddish-gold hair – red being the colour of sin, gold of vindictiveness and mendacity. Curiously enough, in China yellow symbolised imperial splendour, and Buddhist monks wear saffron-coloured robes to indicate their spirituality.

Many artists have felt strongly about the symbolism of various colours, and used it consciously in their paintings. The Russian artist Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944) was given to making sweeping subjective statements about colour, such as 'The power of profound meaning is blue.'

Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890) used colour no less deliberately on occasion. He said that in his painting *Night café* he had tried to express the terrible passion of men by means of red and green – probably following the ideas of Delacroix (1798–1863), another painter who often used the contrast of red and green to represent violence and terror.

Colour can also, of course, be used deliberately and very effectively as a code. In 1943 the colour theorist Faber Birren invented a colour code for safety that has since been widely adopted throughout the world. In this code, red is used for fire fighting devices; orange warns of acute hazards such as cutting edges, exposed machinery or electric wires; yellow (or yellow and purple) warns of obstructions, low beams, edges of pits, and so on, and yellow and black bands warn of hazards from nuclear radiation. Blue is a general caution: machinery marked in blue is not to be used without permission. Green identifies medicine and first-aid cabinets; and black and white is used for signs that do not communicate warnings.

How far is it possible to say that responses to colours are constant throughout mankind? As we have seen in Féré's experiments, certain colours can produce specific physiological reactions – but we have also seen that the symbolism accorded to colours by various cultures varies enormously.

The Lüscher colour test is a psychological test designed to reveal character traits, and has been much used by psychiatrists and psychologists.

The full test involves placing the eight colour samples (right) in order of preference, and some strenuous mental arithmetic. However, the colour you place first is the most significant, and can reveal a great deal about your dominant personality traits.

If you place orange-red first, you are vital and forceful, with a strong desire for action. But you may suffer from physical or mental exhaustion.

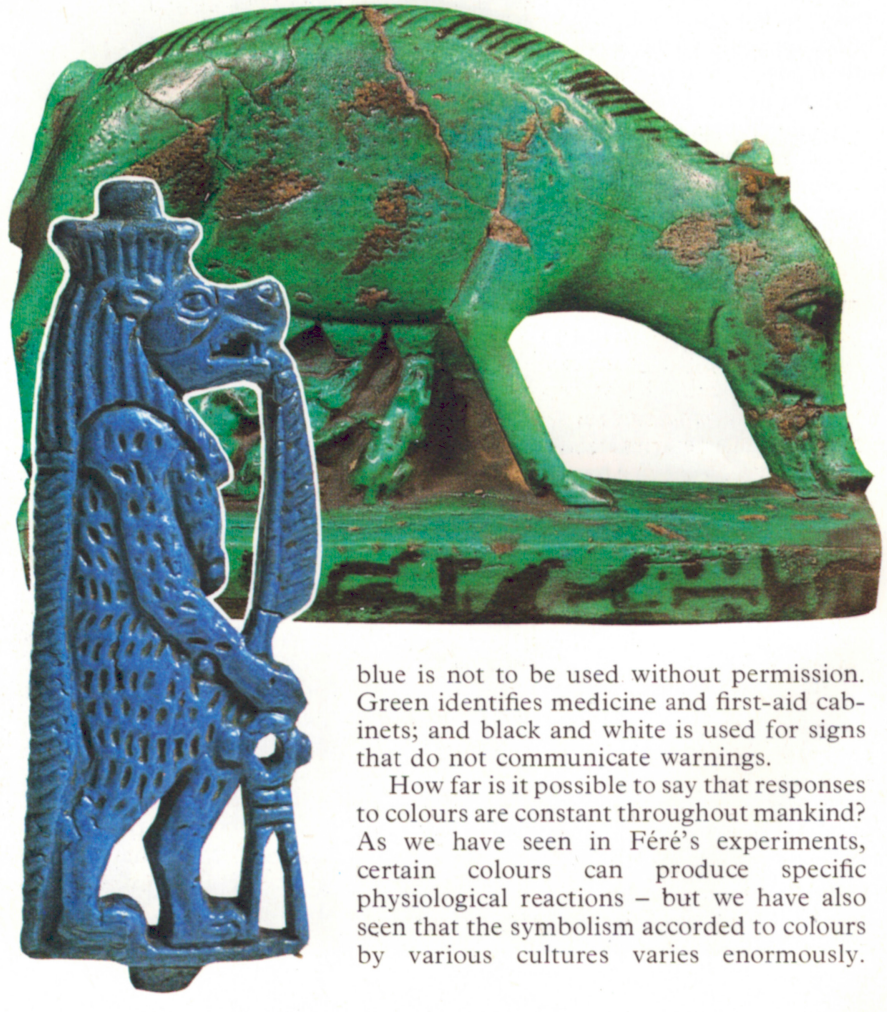
A first choice of bright yellow indicates that you are intelligent, innovative, and full of great hopes. But you may also have an inclination towards superficiality.

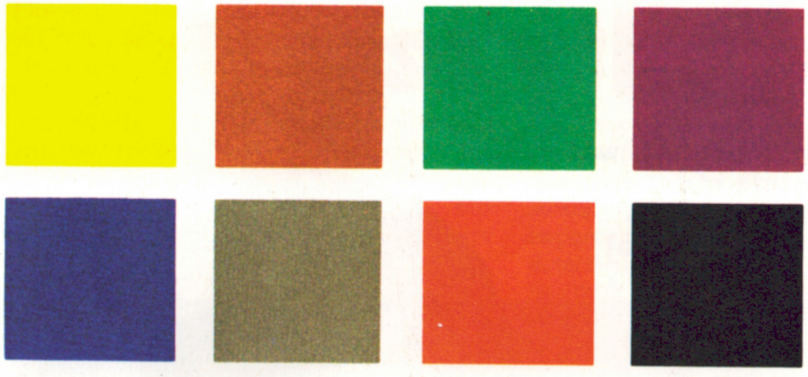
Green implies a wish to impress, to receive recognition, and to have one's own way against opposition and resistance. You may also have a tendency to moralise and to lecture others.

Dark blue indicates a peaceful character. You aim for steady achievement and have a love of order, springing from a need for emotional tranquillity.

A first choice of violet indicates,

Glazed pottery amulets (below) were worn in ancient Egypt to bring luck and ward off evil. The colours had their own magic potency – blue assured the protection of heaven, while green brought fertility





Colour prejudice

according to Lüscher, emotional insecurity, sensitivity, and a desire to cast a spell and enchant other people. It may also indicate sexual deviation.

Brown is very often placed last. If you place it first, you are conservative and have a desire for security.

Those who place grey first wish to live within enclosed walls, and to be left alone.

Finally comes black. This is very rarely placed first. Lüscher interprets a first choice of black as a renunciation of everything, and a protest against the state of things as they are – 'a revolt against fate'.

Kouwer believed that he had discovered a link between a person's character and the way in which he or she reacted to colour. He was confident enough to write in *Colours and their character*, 'The fact that a certain relationship exists between character and colour preference has become evident from so many experiments that further proof is hardly required.' The Lüscher test (see box) is based on exactly the same confidence.

The idea that colour can be of use to medicine is an old one. It was widely believed that scarlet cloth would stop bleeding, and as late as the 1830s, 'tongues' of scarlet cloth were on sale in the streets of London for sufferers from scarlet fever; even today, red flannel is sometimes recommended for the treatment of rheumatism. These ancient remedies were presumably based on the assumption that 'like drives out like', but the Arabian physician Avicenna (980–1037) advised acting according to the opposite principle. In his *Canon of medicine* he wrote:

> If one were to gaze intently at something red, one would cause the sanguineous humour to move. This is why one must not let a person suffering from nose-bleeding see things of a brilliant red colour.

Modern science, too, has made some attempts at using colour therapeutically. In 1875 one Dr Ponza fitted several rooms with windows made of coloured glass, and matching walls and furnishings. Of his red room, he had to report,

> After passing three hours in a red room a man afflicted with taciturn delirium became gay and cheerful; on getting up the next day after his entry into the room, another madman who had refused all food . . . asked for breakfast, and ate with surprising avidity.

His blue room, on the other hand, had a soothing effect: 'A violent case who had to be kept in a strait jacket was shut in the room with the blue window; less than an hour afterwards he had become calmer.'

Other doctors have reported similar experiences with mental patients. In a paper published in 1942, the neurologist Kurt Goldstein found that a patient with a cerebral disease became dizzy and lost her sense of balance when she wore a red dress – but regained her composure if she wore green.

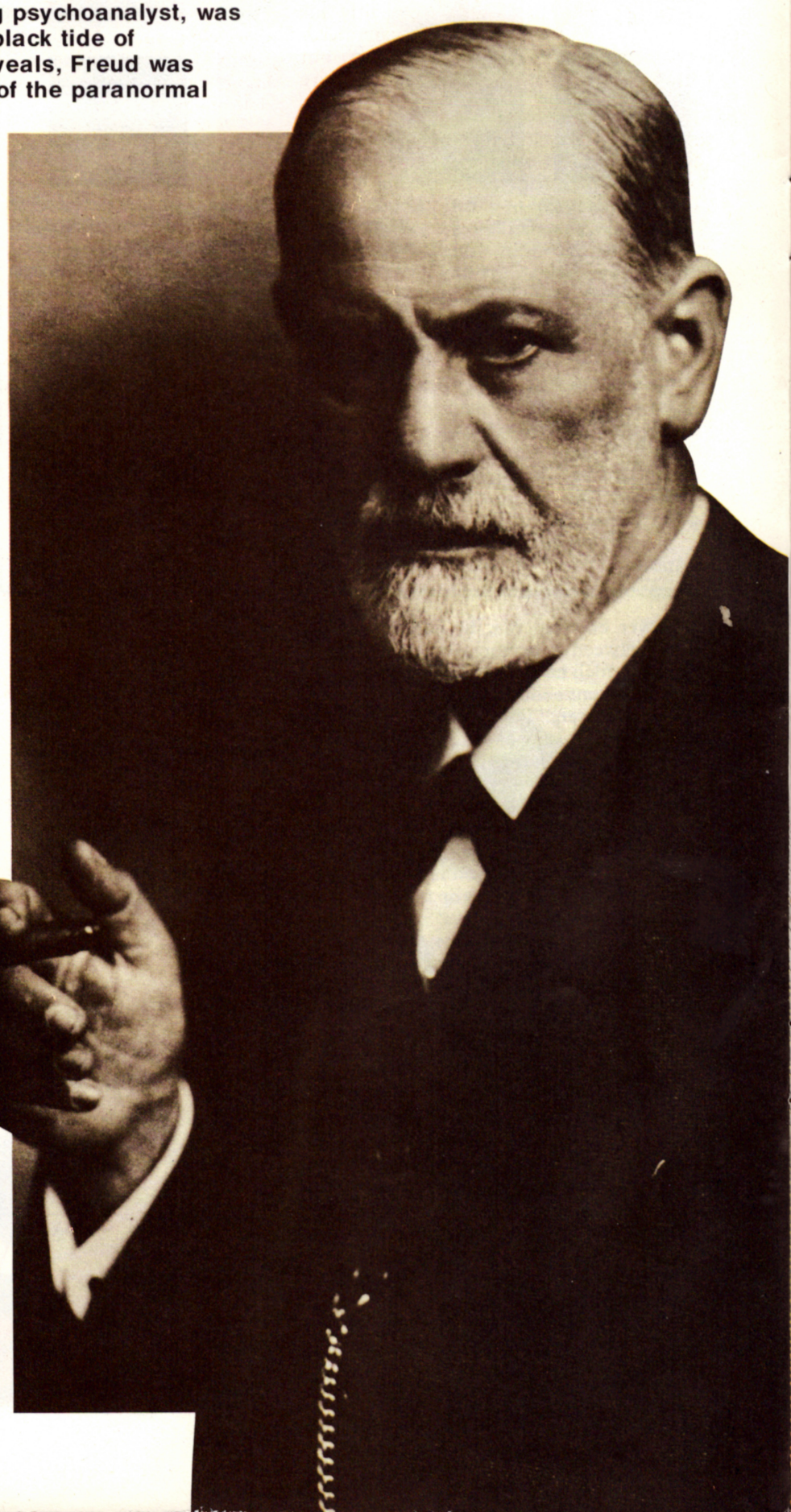
A startling result was reported by one Henner Ertel, director of an institute for rational psychology at Munich, in *Time* magazine of 17 September 1973. He had made a three-year study of children in which he conducted IQ tests in low-ceilinged rooms of different colours; he claimed that the IQs of the children could be raised by up to 12 points in rooms painted light blue, yellow, yellow-green or orange. 'Ugly' colours (brown or black) caused a drop in IQ.

The language of colour is largely lost to us today. Yet it is clear that colour has a powerful influence on our state of mind, and was a potent element in earlier cultures and societies. An understanding of the ancient and traditional colour codes and symbologies might greatly enrich our lives.

Heraldry developed its own colour language. In the armorial bearings of the Vintners Guild of the City of London (below) black stood for penitence, red for courage, gold for loyalty, green for hope and white for faith and purity

Freud's guilty secret

Sigmund Freud, the great pioneering psychoanalyst, was known to revile what he called 'the black tide of occultism'. But, as JOE FRIEDMAN reveals, Freud was actually a believer in some aspects of the paranormal



THOUGH MANY PEOPLE are aware of the work of Sigmund Freud and its importance for our understanding of mental illness, few know of his life-long interest in the paranormal. This is not surprising, however, as Freud himself felt very ambivalent about the subject, and especially about making his interest public. Indeed, most of his writing on the subject was published late in his life, and one of the most important papers only after his death.

Freud's interest in the paranormal centred mainly on telepathy; he never seriously considered the possibility of precognition, asserting:

> The notion that there is any mental power, apart from acute calculation, which can foresee future events in detail is on the one hand too much in contradiction to all the expectations and presumptions of science, and on the other hand corresponds too closely to certain ancient and familiar human desires which criticism must reject as unjustifiable pretensions.

When he further took into account the 'untrustworthiness, credulity, and unconvincingness' of reports of precognition, Freud felt there was nothing in them of interest to science.

However, Freud took a very different line about what he called 'thought transference' or telepathy. Throughout his career his opinion as to whether telepathy existed swung wildly from the most pronounced scepticism to total belief. Frequently his letters declared that he was now 'convinced' of the existence of this phenomenon, but within a short time he would express a desire to forget the whole unsavoury area.

Throughout his life, Freud declared his belief that these phenomena were worthy of scientific investigation – he was a member of both the English and the American societies for psychical research – and indeed he frequently attempted to investigate those incidents in his own life that he felt might have been psychic in origin. For example, a month after he had become engaged, he accidentally broke the engagement ring his fiancée had given him. He wrote to ask her if she had been less fond of him at the time the ring broke. On another occasion, while a student in Paris, he heard what he took to be his fiancée calling his name. He carefully took note of the times of these incidents and wrote to her to find out what was happening at these precise moments. However, Freud found no correlation between what was happening to him and his fiancée's thoughts or actions.

And, in spite of this personal interest in the subject, Freud never had what he regarded as a telepathic dream. Neither did he find any evidence of such dreams among his patients. This failure did not prevent Freud engaging in one of his favourite pastimes, telling stories of strange or uncanny happenings, especially after midnight. Freud was intrigued by the more mysterious aspects of these stories, and when challenged about their validity would reply with his favourite quotation from *Hamlet*: 'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,/Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.'

Freud did, however, have some success in thought transference experiments he held with his close friends. He found the results were 'remarkably good, particularly those in which I played the medium'. Perhaps the most important reason why Freud did not publish the results of these experiments, or declare more forthrightly his belief in telepathy, was his fear that the opponents of psychoanalysis would make use of such 'dubious' testimony against the infant science. Freud had devoted most of his life to establishing the validity of psychoanalysis – its theories and its practice. During much of this time, the science was under attack from many quarters, largely because of its concern with infant sexuality.

Far left: Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), the founder of psychoanalysis, who – as a refugee from the Nazis – spent his last year in England (below, far left: his London consulting rooms). To Freud, sexuality was the most important single factor in determining the mental health of every adult; a view that was at first received with outrage by the Victorian society in which he grew up, but that became increasingly respectable and influential. Indeed, after reading the bulk of Freud's work, Laurence Olivier built his film *Hamlet* (1943) around Freudian concepts – particularly that of the Oedipus complex, or unnaturally deep, sexually tinged relationship between mother and son. Olivier, who directed the film and also played the title role, deliberately chose a younger actress, Eileen Herlie, to play the part of Queen Gertrude, Hamlet's mother (left), thus conveying as explicitly as possible the attraction between mother and son. Significantly, although Freud was extremely wary of becoming involved in the paranormal, his favourite quotation from *Hamlet* was 'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,/ Than are dreamt of in your philosophy'

Escaping 'the black tide'

Freud was loath to bring psychoanalysis under further attack and was frequently urged by his more conservative followers not to publish anything concerning the paranormal. For example, Ernest Jones, Freud's leading disciple in England, thought Freud was wrong to pursue his enquiries in this area and criticised him heavily for publishing an article favourable to the existence of telepathy. Freud replied that he was sorry to have offended 'English sensibilities', but that he had to tell the truth as he saw it. On the other hand, Freud warned Carl Gustav Jung, who was at the time sympathetic to Freud's beliefs, not to get involved in the 'black tide of mud of occultism' and he was distinctly chary of Jung's interest in astrology and mysticism.

In spite of his ambivalent attitude, Freud's work and the new science of psychoanalysis produced several major advances in our understanding of psychic phenomena. Indeed, the methodology of the most successful modern experiments was also foreshadowed in the practice Freud invented.

In 1900 Freud published *The interpretation of dreams*, a work in which some of his most important discoveries in psychology were made public. In it, he described a 'psychological technique which makes it possible to interpret dreams' and further enables us to 'eludicate the processes in which the strangeness and obscurity of dreams are due'.

Freud called this technique 'free association'. His patients were asked to say everything that came into their minds, to communicate every idea or thought that occurred to them without exception. Free association required two preliminary steps. First, the

patient had to concentrate on his own innermost perceptions. To help make this easier, Freud arranged his office so that the patient lay on a couch, and the analyst sat on a chair behind him, so the patient could not easily be distracted by the analyst's movements or facial expressions. It was also important that the room be quiet, so the patient could enter a free-floating mental state.

The second aspect of the preparation involved, as far as possible, the patient becoming an impartial observer and reporter of his own thoughts as they arose, without rationalising or 'editing' them in any way.

When the patient followed these instructions and spontaneously said everything that came into his mind, Freud found that matters that had been previously hidden from consciousness came to the fore. What he was especially interested in, of course, was the meaning and origin of the patient's symptoms, and the way in which they found expression in dreams.

Free association is remarkably similar to the modern parapsychological practice of free response experiments, for example the Ganzfeld procedure (see page 1430). In these experiments, the subject is asked to say everything that comes into his or her mind for a set period of time. Distracting external stimuli are screened out, so that the subject can have access to his innermost thoughts. And indeed, subjects are often warned not to censor their thoughts with reason but to wait until after the experiment to make a rational evaluation of what they have said. The main difference between the two procedures is simply that Freud looked to free association to supply information about the patient's deep-seated emotional problems, and the parapsychologist is seeking to bring to awareness unconscious psi.

The second major contribution to parapsychology of *The interpretation of dreams* involves Freud's theories about *how* unconscious thoughts become conscious. He described how, in each of us, an unconscious 'censor' seems to operate, which examines our thoughts and perceptions and decides which ones are 'suitable' to be allowed into our consciousness. If the censor feels a particular thought is unsuitable, it is distorted, as in dreams, which makes it difficult for our conscious minds to understand the 'unacceptable' message. The different ways in which this distortion can happen are outlined in *The interpretation of dreams.*

The censor steps in

It is rare that precognitive dreams, for example, accurately and literally reveal a future event. Often important details are shifted around, or altered slightly – which may be attributable to the censor. In order for the dream to be understood correctly, these details have to be translated into their original form – and Freud discovered a means of doing this to some extent.

Through the application of this theory, Freud discovered a new class of psychic phenomena, which he felt was not subject to the usual sceptical objections. It was by analysing the *unsuccessful* prophecies of professional fortune tellers that Freud felt he had found a hidden psychic component.

For example, Freud had a patient who was a childless woman, 43 years of age. Her emotional problem was the result of an unusually intense attachment to her father, for whom she hoped to substitute her husband. But frustratingly for her, her husband turned out to be infertile. When she was 27 she took a trip to Paris and visited a palmist who told her that she would have two children before she was 32. This prophecy had, of course, been proved incorrect by time, and yet Freud wondered what was the source of the two numbers in the fortune teller's prediction. He found out that the woman's mother had married her father at the age of 30 – and when she was 32 she had given birth to two children in the course of one year.

Freud felt that the fortune teller had picked up by thought transference his patient's intense desire to be just like her mother, and had satisfied it by telling her that she, too, would have two children at 32.

Another similar incident was discovered in the life of an intelligent young medical student who visited Freud because he felt himself incapable of taking his final examination. Analysis helped the patient to face the task and also revealed a curious story. The young man told Freud how he had consulted an astrologer who was known for being able to make specific predictions about someone on the basis of his birthday alone. He gave the astrologer the birthdate of a man

Left: Freud with his English disciple Ernest Jones in 1919. Freud had been intrigued by the successful results of 'thought transference' (or telepathy) experiments in which he and close friends had participated and published a paper on the subject, but Jones – and others – urged him to leave such subjects well alone if psychoanalysis were to be taken seriously. It seems, however, that parapsychology lost a champion in Freud, for he was also fascinated by the nature of some *unsuccessful* predictions of fortune tellers (below), believing them to mask a special kind of significance

Above: psychical researcher Hereward Carrington, to whom Freud wrote in 1921: 'If I had to live . . . again, I should devote myself to psychical research . . .'

Below right: mother and baby. Freud thought that a child, feeling hungry, believes he has actually created his mother who brings him food. It is, Freud said, at this stage that we begin to develop our lifelong superstitions

who was his rival for the attentions of someone he loved dearly. The astrologer had predicted that the rival would die in July or August of that year, from eating crabs or oysters. Freud asked the young man what was so remarkable about this prophecy, since his rival was still very much alive. The young man replied that the summer before the prediction, his rival had been poisoned by eating oysters and nearly died of it: the astrologer had become aware through telepathy of the young man's intense secret wish – that his rival should die – and also of the incident of the previous summer. Her 'prophecy' was thus indicative of thought transference and not precognition.

However much Freud came to believe in the possibility of telepathy he felt that most omens, presentiments, prophetic dreams and superstitious practices had no foundation in external reality. Rather, he tended to understand these phenomena in the light of the internal reality that psychoanalysis had uncovered. He felt most of these phenomena could be accounted for either by assuming a regression to an earlier stage of thinking, or by the activation of deeply repressed infantile experiences.

The child as God

The earlier stage of thinking that Freud felt was present in much belief of supernatural occurrences was called the stage of 'infantile omnipotence'. Perhaps, this stage can most easily be understood in the relationship of a baby to its mother and her breast (or bottle). The baby feels hungry and wishes his mother were there to feed him – and suddenly and miraculously she is. The child comes to feel that it was his mere thought that brought his mother – bearing food – into being. Later, when the baby comes to understand that it was not his thought that created his mother, and that she and others do not necessarily do what he wishes, he grows out of this stage of development and becomes more realistic. Freud felt that though most of us grow out of this childlike thinking, there are occasions in our later life when we go back to it, and it is especially at these times that we are prone to be superstitious.

The second factor that Freud evoked to explain the belief in superstition was concerned with the activation of forgotten infantile experiences. Superstition was, in Freud's opinion, derived from suppressed hostile and cruel impulses. For example, if a child wishes ill on a parent or sibling, but knows that this is wrong, he may come to repress these thoughts and feelings. Later, he may project them onto the outside world and come to imagine there are evil or destructive spirits, ghosts or demons around. Through this kind of explanation, Freud hoped to 'tame' the supernatural, relegating it to a category of unconscious psychology.

Whenever he attempted this kind of explanation, Freud was careful to add that he did not believe that all paranormal phenomena could be explained in this way; some – a small core of objectively verifiable incidents – he felt should be taken seriously and carefully analysed. Freud did not feel that the existence of telepathy would upset the findings of psychoanalysis, especially those concerning the structure and symbolism of dreams. In fact, he believed it would be possible to incorporate a belief in telepathy into dream analysis, assuming that telepathic material is often used by the unconscious mind as a basis for some dreams. Freud proposed that the psychoanalyst should treat the telepathic contribution in the same way as the other dream material – thus providing further proof of the efficacy of psychoanalysis.

In fact, in a letter written in 1921 to psychical researcher Hereward Carrington, Freud said: 'If I had to live all over again, I should devote myself to psychical research rather than to psychoanalysis.' He also stated that 'it would be a great satisfaction to me if I could convince myself and others on unimpeachable evidence of the existence of telepathic processes.' It was such doubts that probably prevented Sigmund Freud making a more outstanding contribution to our understanding of the paranormal and the subtler workings of the human mind.

For Jung's outspoken championship of the paranormal see page 2974

A visit to Troytown

Mazes all over Europe, of a curiously similar design, bear the name 'Troy'. Is there a connection with the classical city – or is the link to be found still further back in history? PETER JAMES examines this intriguing aspect of the mystery of the labyrinth

THE NAME OF TROY usually conjures up romantic images of the 10 years' struggle between the Greeks and Trojans over the infamously beautiful Helen. This was the Troy immortalised in the epic poetry of Homer. Yet, strangely, the defeated city also seems to have been commemorated in the names of dozens of places scattered over the map of Europe. Often called 'Troytowns', these places are generally not human settlements but mazes, marked out on the ground with stones or lines of turf that, as far as we can judge, may be remnants of a tradition dating back to the megalithic cultures of prehistoric Europe. But why were they built, and what possible connection can the mazes of rural Europe have with the Troy of classical legend?

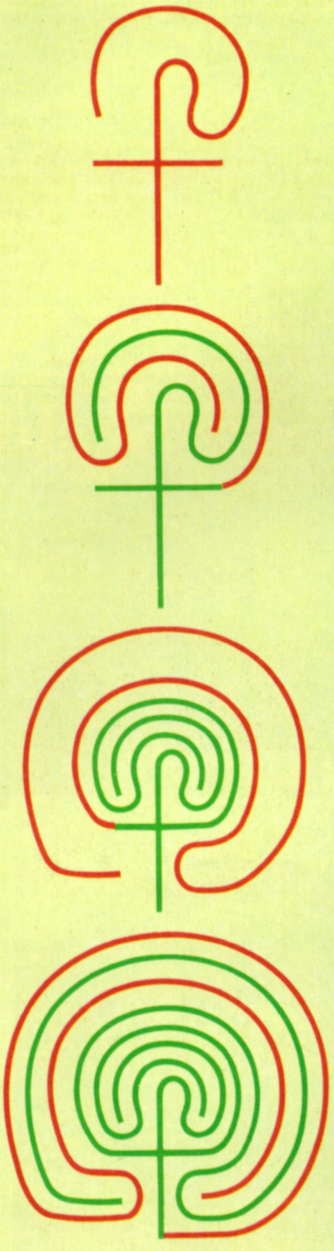
The fragments of traditional lore still associated with the British and continental 'Troytowns' are sparse and tantalising. We have records of the seasonal cutting of so-called 'walls of Troy' from pieces of turf by Welsh shepherds in the 18th century, but no indication of why this was done. In some parts of Britain there was certainly a custom of running the maze; for example, it was said locally at Breamore in Hampshire that one person could run from the 'Mizmaze' there to Gallows Hill some half a mile (800 metres) away and back again in the time that it took another runner to complete the circuit of the maze. The 'Shepherds' Ring' or 'Shepherds' Race' at Boughton Green, Northamptonshire, was once the site of a popular midsummer fair in which the main event was the custom of 'treading' the maze, which was presumably a race of some kind. Other mazes are situated near abbeys – but which is older, the abbey or the maze? The abbey mazes are thought to have had a purely devotional function, providing the monks with a secluded path through which to meander during their meditations.

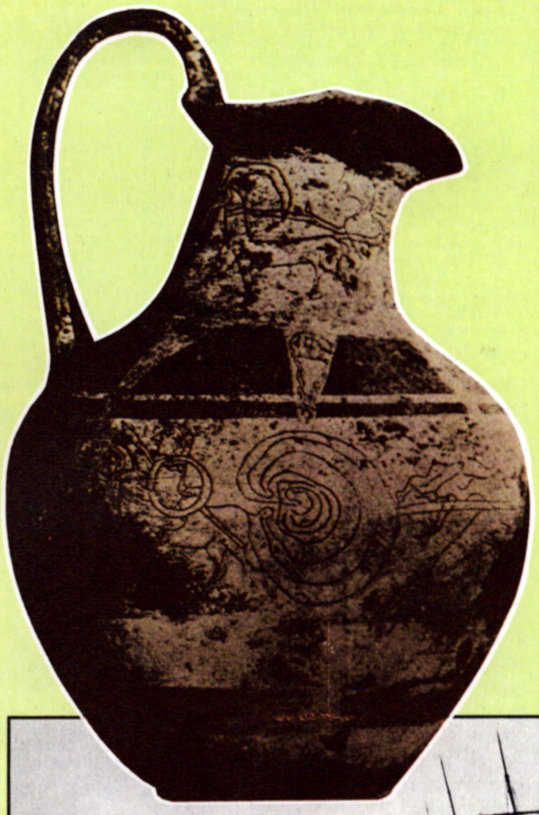
Few of these local traditions have any real substance to them. Rather, the memories that have survived concerning the 'Troytowns' are relics that merely hint of old customs and beliefs without providing any concrete insights. The well-known 18th-century antiquarian William Stukeley commented scathingly: 'The lovers of antiquity, particularly of the inferior class, always speak of 'em with great pleasure as if there was something extraordinary in the thing, tho' they cannot tell what.'

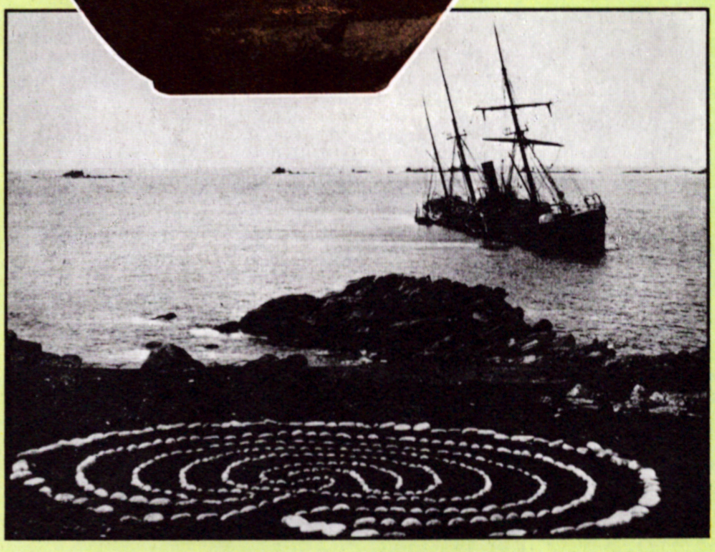
A clue to the original customs performed at the mazes, as well as the Troy association, seems to come from the *Aeneid* by the Roman poet Virgil, who was active in the first century BC. According to legend, the foundations of the later Rome were laid by the fugitive Trojan prince Aeneas, and Rome was the spiritual successor to Troy. A curious passage in the *Aeneid* describes how the hero's son Ascanius led a ceremonial dance of the Trojan youths, in which the weaving, spiralling movements were said to represent the twists and turns of the Cretan labyrinth. This *Troia* or 'Troy game' was performed

Right: stages of development in one of the commonest maze patterns, found in exactly the same form throughout the world. It has been proposed that the shape may be in some way archetypal – a suggestion borne out by an experience related by Geoffrey Russell. One night in 1944 he awoke from sleep with a compulsion to note on paper a design of which he had just dreamed. Over 20 years later he realised the design was the basic maze pattern

The basic maze pattern, in varying degrees of complexity, repeats itself: the turf maze at Troy Farm, Somerton, Oxfordshire (above); the 'City of Troy' turf maze in Brandsby cum Stearsby parish in North Yorkshire (right); and the Troy maze on St Agnes, Scilly Isles (above right), in 1885, with the deserted wreck of the *Earl of Lonsdale* behind it. The recurrence of the name 'Troy' is striking – but can it really indicate a link with the classical city of Troy?







Above left: an Etruscan terracotta wine-jar from around 600 BC, found in Tragliatella, Italy. It shows a warrior on horseback trailing behind him an unmistakable maze shape identical to the 'Troytown' maze designs that are to be found throughout Europe. In the outside layer of the maze stands the word TRUIA. All the clues seem to point to a link between mazes and the city of Troy – but experts believe that the word comes from an ancient Indo-European root meaning 'turning', 'winding' or 'spiralling'

annually at Rome, and evidently became a religious ritual of great importance. As described by the classical scholar Jackson Knight 'the Troia must have been intended to create a magical field of exclusive force, an abstract defensive entanglement.' One illustration of the ritual, on an Etruscan vase dating from around 600 BC, shows a line of warriors, some on horseback and some on foot, trailing behind them an unmistakable maze shape identical to the 'Troytown' labyrinths of Europe. In the last fold of the spiralling maze stands the word TRUIA.

It is easy to infer from all this that the ancient 'Troytowns' were built as centres for the Roman spiralling dance that commemorated the ancestral city of Troy, but such a picture would yield little sense. How could the Romans have spread the 'Troy' maze shape when the oldest spiral and maze patterns are thousands of years older than the Roman Empire? The alternative hypothesis, that the more ancient civilisations of Troy itself had enough influence to stamp its name and customs on prehistoric Europe, seems hopelessly far-fetched, and there is no evidence to support it.

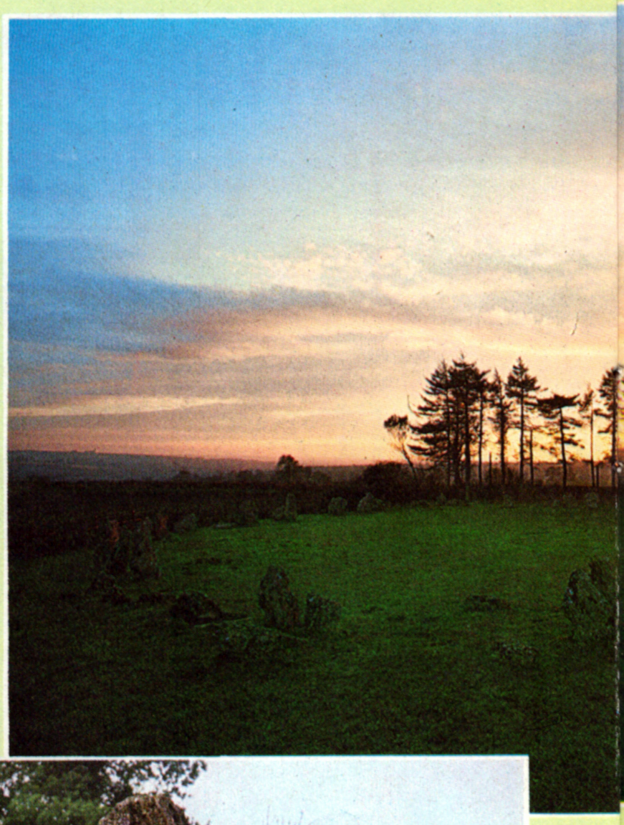
Perhaps, then, the association with Troy is mistaken, becoming linked with the spiral-shaped mazes of Europe after knowledge of Homer's epics had been spread through Europe by the Romans. But why should the name Troy have been chosen for mazes? Troy, unlike Knossos (see page 2883), was never the site of a famous labyrinth. And can we seriously argue that shepherds and peasants throughout Europe were so well-versed in the classics that they were impelled to commemorate the name of Troy by attaching it to their traditional maze sites?

The only possible solution of the problem is that the association with Troy is as old as the mazes themselves and that there is no connection with the famous Homeric city. This conclusion has been reached by most linguists who have tackled the 'Troytown' problem. The reality seems to be that the names are derived from words in Indo-European languages meaning 'to turn' – such as the Latin *troare* the the Celtic root *-tro*. Thus the maze known in Wales as 'Gaer Droia' does not signify the 'Castle of Troy', but the 'Castle of Turnings', or 'Turning Castle', an apt enough description of the spiral ground maze. The Roman *Troia* ritual, likewise, may have been named after the spiralling motions of the magical dance, and the connection with Troy may simply be an erudite mistake on the part of the Romans themselves.

Thus the theory that mazes have anything to do with the city of Troy proves to be as much a dead end as the idea that all mazes were derived from an ancient Egyptian labyrinth (see page 2883). It would seem more likely that the maze design arose independently in several different areas. This conclusion seems unavoidable in view of the geographical extent of the basic spiral maze

pattern, which is far more widespread than is generally recognised in academic texts concerning the architectural development of the labyrinth. The same maze shape occurs not only on the classical Cretan coins showing the labyrinth of Minos, but also occurs as a sacred symbol in ancient Rajasthan, India, and even in the New World with the Hopi Indians and among the patterns included in the Nazca desert drawings of Peru (see page 310).

Attempts have been made to understand the recurrence of the basic maze pattern in terms of psychological archetypes of the kind envisaged by Carl Jung (see page 426). An experience related by Geoffrey Russell certainly suggests that the maze design can drift into the human unconscious in a most unexpected way. One day in 1944 he awoke from a dream with the compulsive urge to commit a certain pattern to paper. Nearly two decades later he realised that the drawing, which he had filed in his papers, was identical in design to ancient mazes from both Tintagel in Cornwall and a pattern that appears on the coins of ancient Crete.



Right: the Rollright circle of standing stones in Oxfordshire. Members of the Dragon Project (below) have found spiral 'lines of force' along the surfaces of the stones; and Charles Brooker, in a report published in *New Scientist* in January 1983, told of an experiment in which he had used a gaussmeter to confirm the existence of 'lines of force' spiralling outwards from the centre (below right), sensed by a dowser

Seventh heaven

A unifying theme that lies behind all the ancient mazes and labyrinths is their use as a symbol of the nether world, death and resurrection (see page 2885). Even in ancient Babylonia, where there were no labyrinths as such, similar ideas seem to have lain behind the use of the spiral shape. The original Tower of Babel, the Etemenanki of Babylon, was a seven-tier mass of brickwork with a spiral stairway. Its upper half – the seven visible tiers – was thought to symbolise the stages of the upper world of heaven. (Today we still talk of 'seventh heaven', unwittingly following Babylonian tradition.) The subterranean half of Etemenanki (actually largely imaginary) was supposed to mirror the upper part and extend down to the bowels of the underworld, in a seven-level spiral structure similar to the model world above.

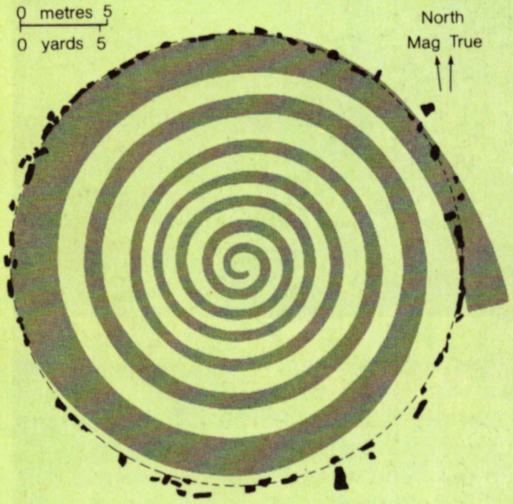
Mazes have, as often as not, seven sets of curves around a central point. If the labyrinth is indeed a symbol of death and resurrection, this recurrence of the number seven forms a striking parallel to the seven-layered underworld of Babylonian thought. Similarly, in an Old Welsh poem *The spoils of Annwm*, telling of a raid by King Arthur and his warriors on a fairyland or underworld, the refrain stresses the fact that only seven men returned. The link with maze mythology is assured by the name given to this otherworld – Caer Sidi or 'Spiral Castle', curiously similar to Caer Droia or 'Turning Castle'. Writer Geoffrey Ashe made a brave attempt to explain the persistent elements behind all these traditions – spiral and circle, maze, underworld and the number seven – by proposing a novel theory in which the 'ancient wisdom' behind the old myths is derived from an original centre of mysticism in the Altai mountains of central Asia. But Ashe's concept of a repository of abstract occult knowledge in prehistoric times does not explain anything; Ashe finds nothing more significant behind the awe in which the number seven is held than a suggested association with the constellation of Pleiades. Something more potent and vital, surely, must have lain behind the 'maze urge'. Ashe himself perhaps points the way when he describes the seven-fold maze as 'an association of "charged" centrality with hard or roundabout access'. Could the circular design of many of the mazes, suggestive of the spiral, have been symbolic of an actual force sensed by ancient Man?

The idea that maze building involved ancient sensitivity to an unknown form of energy was put forward in the 1960s by Guy

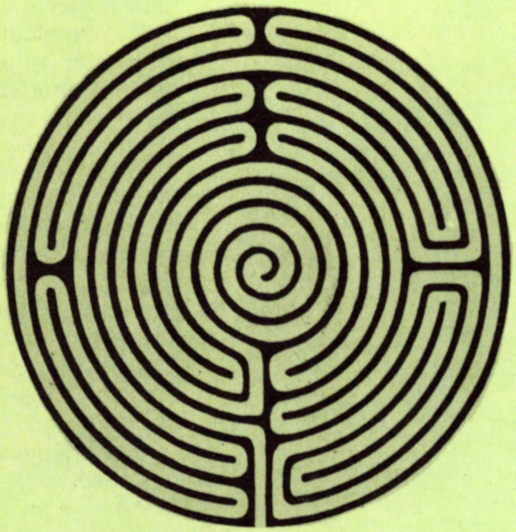
Underwood, a dowser whose extensive field work included all the major prehistoric monuments of Britain. Underwood claimed he could detect a lingering energy field rippling through the Earth's surface. This geodetic force channelled itself through underground streams, and prehistoric Man chose to place his sacred sites at their confluences (see page 554). With regard to the maze lore of the ancient world, Underwood's crucial claim was that the mysterious geodetic force often formed spiral shapes under standing stones and stone rings that, through some natural law, twisted into multiples of seven coils.

Underwood's work was idiosyncratic, to say the least, and the word of one dowser alone is, of course, insufficient reason to consider the maze problem solved. But Underwood's claims are backed by dozens of other dowsers for whom the tingling sensations produced by an invisible force at megalithic sites are commonplace. The force, as magnetometer experiments have shown, appears to be part of the Earth's magnetic field. In 1979 an extraordinary, and successful, experiment was carried out on a standing stone by writer Francis Hitching, mathematics professor John Taylor and Bill Lewis, one of Britain's most capable dowsers (see page 1577). Lewis's claim that he could detect a band of force spiralling up the stone in seven coils was apparently confirmed by the readings of a gaussmeter, which registered anomalously high magnetic strengths at the points where Lewis had marked the stone.

Early in 1983 *New Scientist* carried a report of some even more startling results achieved by engineer Charles Brooker at the Rollright Stones in Oxfordshire. Using a magnetometer, Brooker found distinct fluctuations in the geomagnetic field within the stone circle and was surprised to find that a local dowser also 'reported tingling sensations exactly where the recording magnetometer produced blips on the chart'. Brooker then conducted a more detailed survey and discovered that the 'magnetic pattern inside the stone circle forms a seven ring spiral, broadening as it moves outward until it leaves the circle. . . .' Brooker's conclusion – though he remains baffled by the implications – is that the stone circles were deliberately set up as 'magnetic refuges – Stone Age Faraday cages'. Here we find the idea of containment or protection that is so conspicuous in the maze symbol.



Below: the 'Shepherd's Ring' maze at Boughton Green, Northamptonshire, once the site of a midsummer fair in which the main event was 'treading' the maze – presumably some kind of race. The inside of the maze is spiral in shape, the outer parts taking the form of concentric circles. Not all mazes are, strictly speaking, spiral; however, scientific research such as Booker's suggests that they are all built to imitate, or perhaps to control, the local geomagnetic field



Maze urge

The idea that the ancients were aware of a force as subtle as the Earth's magnetic field seems bizarre from a 20th-century perspective. Yet Brooker's discovery – and there is no good reason to doubt it – of a seven-ring magnetic field at Rollright provides the first neat explanation for the 'maze urge', tying together the spiral shape, the underworld connotations (perhaps derived from the magnetic forces inside the Earth), the standing stones and the ubiquitous number seven. No other force or idea has been suggested that makes such coherent sense of all the strands in the maze puzzle. We are obliged to consider the idea that some understanding of the Earth's magnetic field lay behind the maze cult and, more generally, the ancient fascination with spirals of seven coils.

Were the spiralling maze-like dances such as the *Troia* performed and the spiral and circular structures built simply to imitate geomagnetic eddies – or, as appears to be the case at Rollright, to contain and control them? What significance did the geomagnetic field have to the ancients, that it evoked such important symbols of life and death? What precisely the ancients knew, or how they used or hoped to use geomagnetic forces is, for the present, unfathomable. The spiral forms manifested by the Earth's field are only now being rediscovered with the aid of magnetometers and the pioneering work of scientists like Brooker. The ancient maze patterns, as well as being eloquent symbols of ancient cosmology and ritual, may well be evidence of an older and more intimate acquaintance than our own with the magnetic forces inherent in the Earth.

Further reading

Francis Hitching, *Earth magic*, Pan 1978
Jill Purce, *The mystic spiral*, Thames and Hudson 1974
W. H. Matthews, *Mazes and labyrinths*, Longmans, Green & Co., 1922

Subud: agony and ecstasy

When an unknown Javanese book-keeper, Pak Subuh, began to experience visionary revelations, little did he know that one day he would lead a world-famous spiritual movement. SHONA BURNS tells the extraordinary story

Right: Pak Subuh, exponent of the spiritual discipline that he called Subud. Javanese by birth, Subuh received the revelations that led him to preach Subud while working as a book-keeper in his home town of Semarang (below)

IN THE EARLY 1950S a young Hungarian actress started to attend meetings of a group of followers of the mystic and teacher George Ivanovich Gurdjieff (see page 2501). She had become increasingly dissatisfied with the superficial nature of her life as an actress, and the Gurdjieff philosophy and psychological exercises practised at John Bennett's Institute for the Comparative Study of History, Philosophy and the Sciences in London seemed to her to offer the meaning she had been looking for in her life.

The name of the actress was Eva Bartok. A year or so later, in 1957, she was in California, having just made a film there. She began to experience severe abdominal pain, and doctors in California told her she must have an immediate operation. Eva, however, felt impelled to return to London. She flew back, and arranged with doctors in London to be operated on as soon as possible. The doctors in London told her something the Californian doctors had missed: she was pregnant. Eva Bartok very much wanted to have a child, and the proposed operation would be impossible without terminating the baby's life.

She was distraught. She was about to leave her hotel for the hospital when the telephone rang; it was John Bennett. He urged her to postpone the operation and go to his house at Coombe Springs, Kingston, just outside London, to meet someone whom the Gurdjieff group was expecting to arrive from Java within the next few days.

'He . . . is the one we are waiting for,' John Bennett told her. 'He . . . will lift our work to another level.'

Since Gurdjieff's death in 1949, the scattered groups that continued to practise his psychological exercises and physical movements had been without a co-ordinating guide. John Bennett, who ran the groups at Coombe Springs, had felt for some time that another teacher would appear – someone who would carry Gurdjieff's work further. In his autobiography *Witness* (1975), Bennett relates how, while he was on a visit to Damascus in 1955, he met a holy man who told him, 'A Messenger is already on earth. . . . Before long he will come to the West . . . you are one of those chosen to prepare the way.'

Now a spiritual teacher from Indonesia was due to arrive at Coombe Springs – a man known as Pak ('Mr') Subuh. Although to all outward appearances just an ordinary man, he was perhaps, Bennett told Eva Bartok, 'the man who knows where the switch is which floods the inner life of man with light.' Many sick people who had been in touch with Pak Subuh, Bennett said, had recovered their health – although he made no claims to be a faith healer.

Eva decided to postpone her operation for a week or so and went to stay at Coombe Springs. Pak Subuh arrived in London with his wife and two disciples, and his wife and a woman disciple visited Eva at Coombe and initiated her into the *latihan* – a form of practical spiritual training. A day or two later, she was taken to London to meet Pak Subuh himself. He told her that what he could teach her, Subud – the name was a contraction of three Sanskrit words, *Susila*, *Budhi* and *Dharma* (see box) – was not a philosophy, religion or method of faith healing. It was a practical process that awakened Man's higher centres, or levels of being.

Eva was now practising the latihan every day, and each day she was feeling better. Then one morning at Coombe she awoke with severe pains. Doctors were sent for –

but it was Pak Subuh who arrived first. He came to Eva's room with his wife and disciples and began the latihan with her. In her book *Worth living for* (1959) – written, curiously, entirely in the third person – Eva describes how she 'felt shaken by a force that can only be compared, if it has to be, with electricity. It was frightening to her, and her whole body shook. It seemed to continue for a long time, blotting out all other sensations.'

The pain did not go away immediately. It continued for several days. Yet, slowly, she began to feel better. The day fixed for her operation arrived – and Eva decided to cancel it. Pak Subuh came to do the latihan with her once more. 'The same strong power within her shook her. She felt as if something new was born inside her and something else was dying.' It seemed to her that her old life had died, and with it her illness. A new Eva Bartok began to live and, a few months later, gave birth to a healthy baby daughter.

Who was this apparent miracle worker, Pak Subuh? Indonesian by birth, he had a remarkable spiritual history, according to John Bennett's description in his book *Subuh* (1958). He was born in Semarang, in Java, on 22 June 1901; the month of his birth was, apparently, notable for the number of earth tremors recorded and the eruption of several Javanese volcanoes. At first the baby was called Sukarno. The child was sickly and would not take food, and his parents feared he would die. An old man passing the house heard the women inside wailing and lamenting, and asked the reason. When he was told the child was dying, he said he was wrongly named, and should be called Muhammad Subuh (Subuh means 'dawn'). The name was changed, and the child began to thrive.

Left: Eva Bartok, the Hungarian actress and follower of the Armenian mystic and teacher Gurdjieff, whose life was changed by Subuh. While making a film in California in 1957, she began to experience severe abdominal pain, and doctors advised an immediate operation – which, however, would have resulted in the death of the child she was expecting. Pak Subuh introduced her to the *latihan* – his form of practical spiritual training. Slowly Eva Bartok recovered from her illness – and, some months later, gave birth to a healthy baby

As a very young child Muhammad Subuh showed evidence of clairvoyant powers. When he was two, for instance, his grandmother took him to a betrothal ceremony. The infant declared that the couple were unsuitable for each other, and would separate within a year. When this prediction came true the child's grandmother, not surprisingly, refused to take him to any more such occasions.

When he was about 16, Muhammad Subuh heard predictions from more than one source that he would die at an early age, either at 24 or 32. He left school and began to travel in search of a guru who would explain the reason for his strange fate. He sought out many of the spiritual teachers of Java, but every one refused to teach him. At last one of them, the Sheikh Abdurrahman, who belonged to a Dervish order, told him that he would receive his teaching from a non-human source. Muhammad Subuh finally gave up his search, married, and settled down to life as a book-keeper in Semarang.

Revelation at night

One night in 1925, he was out walking when he saw in the moonless sky overhead 'a bright ball of light . . . resembling the sun.' What happened next is described by Husein Rofé in his book *The path of Subud* (1959): the ball of light descended and 'touched his head and he began to quiver and shake as if attacked by ague'. He thought he was having a heart attack, and hurried home and went to bed. But a strange force raised him up to a standing position quite independently of his own will or intention and impelled him to go through the ritual of the Muslim prayer. This was the beginning of a 'series of spiritual phenomena which lasted for approximately one thousand nights'. During this time he had many visions and inner experiences; and although he scarcely slept at night throughout this period, he was nevertheless able to carry out his job during the day. At the end of three years the nightly visitations stopped, and for the next five years he lived an ordinary life – its only curious aspect was that he noticed that his friends turned to him increasingly for advice and help, as if he had access to some special knowledge. When he was 32, it was revealed

to him that 'the wealth of power and illumination which had been given to him . . . must be freely handed on to all who asked for aid.'

The year before, he had already been told by an inner voice that he should now retire from all worldly activity. Accordingly he gave up his job, even though he had a wife and six children to support. When his wife remonstrated with him, he told her, 'You will see that we shall be well provided for; we shall lack nothing essential.' He never worked for money again; and yet it appears that he and his family always had everything that they needed.

Spiritual current

From 1933 Muhammad Subuh began to pass on to others the 'spiritual current' he had received. He discovered that it was enough for him to stand quietly in the presence of another person, and in a few minutes the other person would begin to experience the working of an inner force. It was as if, said Husein Rofé, 'a new force was being made available in the world . . . as if mankind could now contain a form of electricity'. But it was not only Muhammad Subuh who could pass the 'current' on. It seemed that disciples who had been initiated, and practised receiving the 'current' for some time, could then, in their turn, initiate others.

The effects of the initiation might, apparently, include the healing of diseases, and the elimination of phobias and ingrained, self-destructive habits such as addiction to drugs or alcohol. Although healing of long-standing illnesses had never been claimed as an end of Subud, it was apparently often a by-product of the initiation.

For a little more than 20 years Subud spread slowly in Indonesia: it was not until the mid 1950s that it began to move into the outside world. Husein Rofé was the first disciple to take Subud abroad – first to Cyprus, and then to England. John Bennett describes in *Witness* how he met Rofé in London in 1956, and was at first repelled by his presentation of Subud:

> He struck me as a man of unusual intelligence and very widely read, but his outlook was strangely materialistic. . . . His stories of marvels, such as flights on the astral plane, of premonitions fulfilled and psychic phenomena, familiar to lovers of the occult, were anathema to me.

Bennett was busy with many concerns, and was also in the middle of writing a book. He told himself that he should stay away from Rofé and do nothing more about Subud until the book was finished. Then, to his surprise, 'the very same inner voice that I had learned to trust interrupted me and said: "On the contrary, you must go now."'

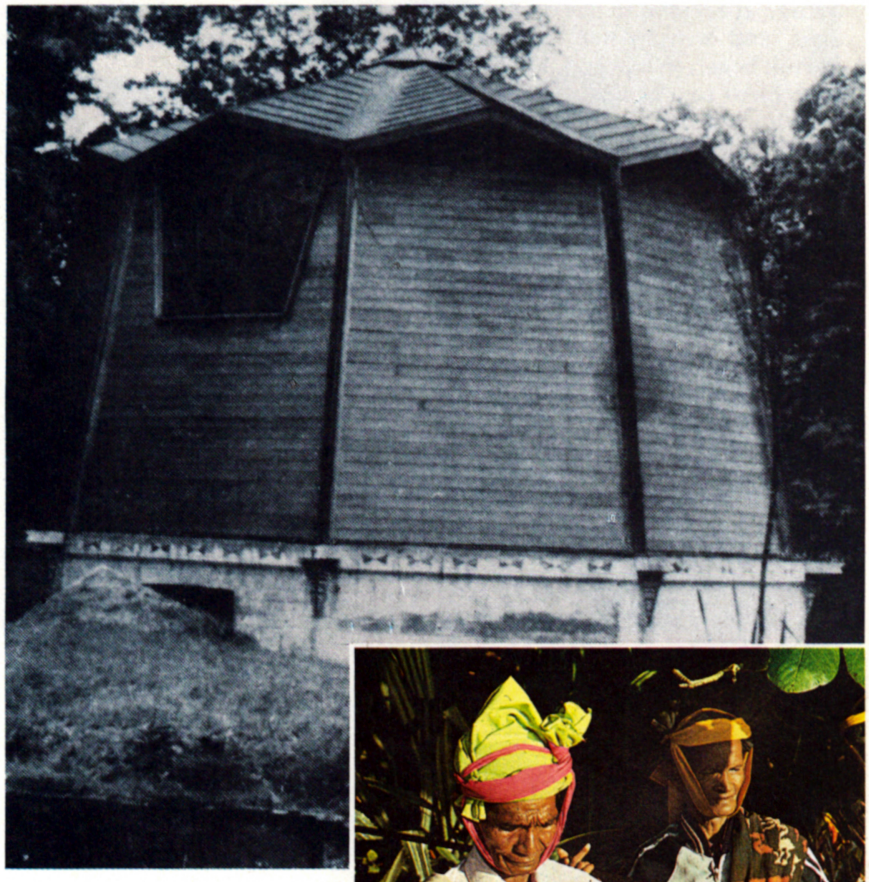
He went to Rofé on 25 November 1956 and asked him to perform the initiation that gave contact with the life force of the Subud latihan. Before performing the 'opening' Rofé described the force to Bennett as 'an electric current that can be switched on and off at will. He said that I would feel its presence as a thrill or vibration.' Afterwards, Bennett said that he had not experienced anything that could be called a vibration, but the restless movements of his thoughts ceased, and

> I entered a state of consciousness that I had supposed to be attainable only by a long well-directed effort. Soon I ceased to think at all, but was aware of an almost unbroken consciousness, free from all mental activity and yet intensely alive and blissful.

Bennett was 'deeply impressed'. He went

Further reading

J. G. Bennett, *Concerning Subud*, Hodder and Stoughton 1959
J. G. Bennett, *Witness*, Hodder and Stoughton 1962



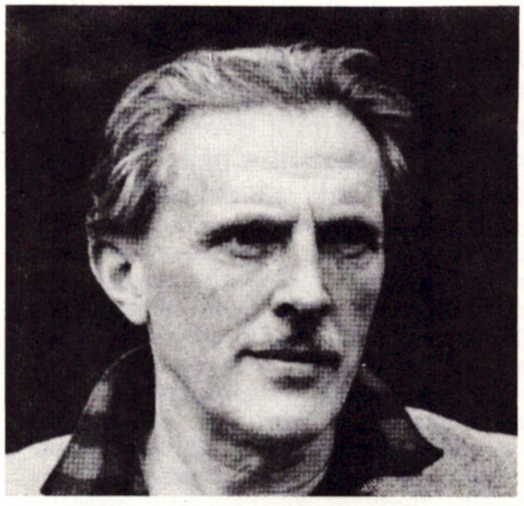
Above: the Djamichunatra, an edifice built by J. G. Bennett at his house at Coombe Springs, just outside London. According to Pak Subuh, the nine sides represented the nine spiritual powers of mankind

Right: Indonesian shamans. Living in a society in which psychic powers are taken very seriously, Pak Subuh was instantly convinced of the genuineness of the 'spiritual instruction' he received in visions

on practising the latihan, together with others in London whom Rofé had initiated. In February 1957, Rofé spoke to some of them about the possibility of Muhammad Subuh coming to England.

Pak Subuh arrived in London on 21 May 1957. John Bennett went to meet him at the airport, and saw him 'sitting quietly on a chair, alone and indifferent to the excited throng of passengers'. Almost inevitably, Bennett compared him with Gurdjieff:

> Both men had the same power to create around them their own environment, into which no alien influence could penetrate. . . . Gurdjieff was . . . a striking and impressive figure. . . . Pak Subuh was by comparison insignificant, and seemed to deflect attention away from himself as if it were his will to remain unnoticed.



Right: J. G. Bennett, a follower of Gurdjieff who became the champion of Subud in England. In 1959 he organised a Subud international congress (below) at Coombe Springs. By then, knowledge of Subud had spread throughout the world – and the congress attracted over 400 delegates

A house had been rented for the little party in north London, and during the following month Pak Subuh and his wife, with two disciples to help them, 'opened' more than 400 people at Coombe Springs. John Bennett describes how

> Subud acted with explosive violence. Many of those who came were either terrified or disgusted by the pitiless exposure of the human self, as it was stripped naked in the latihan. . . . Others were lifted into such an ecstasy that they could scarcely be persuaded to restrict themselves to the two or three latihans a week that Pak Subuh prescribed.

As to what exactly happened to people who experienced the latihan, Muhammad Subuh himself is quoted, in Robert Lyle's *Subud* (1983), as saying that the latihan consists of 'movements and vibrations felt throughout the body [that comprise] a process of purification'. This process, apparently, encourages each person 'to find himself . . . and become independent'. Elsewhere, in Edward van Hien's *What is Subud?* (1963), he is quoted as saying that there was no dogma in Subud, but only

> a fact which works and grows and goes on by itself . . . our hearts change, our characters change, our physical health changes, and what was wrong in us is put right – all this is the working of a powerful force of life, which cannot be known by our ordinary instruments and organs of perception.

With his customary energy, John Bennett threw himself into organising and spreading knowledge of Subud. He gave lectures, travelled abroad, and himself initiated many people. Within four years, however, he had abandoned Subud – apparently feeling that it did not offer his restless mind enough material to work on. But elsewhere, in Britain and abroad, groups continue to use – with success – the mysterious teachings of the enigmatic Pak Subuh.

The way, the truth, the life

What is Subud? The word is derived from three ancient Sanskrit words – Susila, Budhi, and Dharma.

Susila means 'to have good morals'. Pak Subuh's interpretation is 'Right living according to the Will of God'.

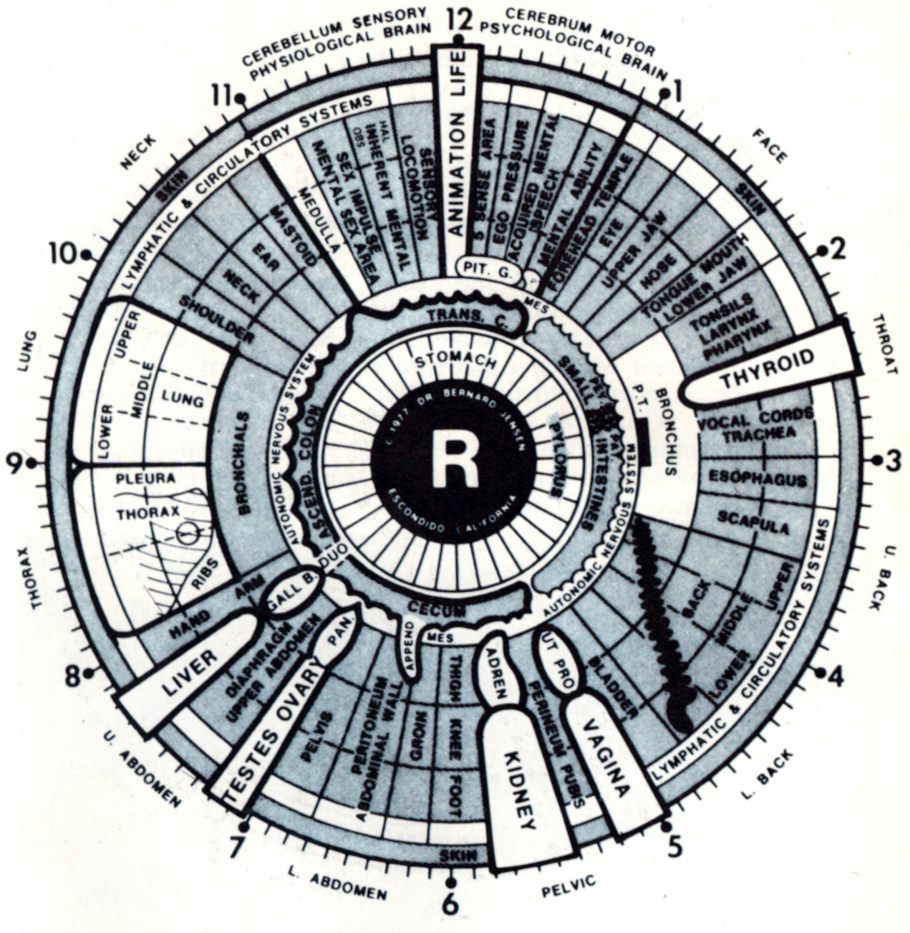
The word Budhi has a more complex meaning. It is the power of the intellect, consciousness, or the will of Man. For Pak Subuh, it is 'The inner force or power that resides within the nature of Man himself.'

Dharma means law, the world order, duty or fate. Pak Subuh uses it to mean 'Submission, surrender and sincerity in receiving the gift of Grace from the Almighty'.

Thus Subud is the harmony of Man's outer and inner life when he lives in submission to the divine principle as revealed to him through the highest centre of consciousness – which is seated, according to Subuh, in the soul rather than in the brain.

Is there a 'map' of the whole body in the iris of each eye? And does it provide a guide to various disorders and their treatments? Iridologists claim it does. D. M. KALMAN explains the history and principles of this unorthodox method of diagnosis

Seeing eye to eye



The chart developed by the leading modern iridologist, Dr Bernard Jensen. Dark or light spots and lines in the iris are believed to indicate the condition of the organs marked in the corresponding areas of the chart. The iris has seven concentric zones, the outermost related to the skin and the sensory nerves, the inner two related to the stomach and intestines. If the fibres making up the iris are closely knit and uniform, the constitution is strong; if they are open and irregular, it is more difficult to preserve the health of the body. Lesions, or apparent openings in the pattern of fibres, are important indicators of weaknesses in specific organs. Traces of bodily disorders never entirely leave the iris, even when the conditions have passed

FROM EARLIEST ANTIQUITY the eye has been believed to be one of the best indicators of personality, temperament, romantic feelings and spiritual condition. It has been regarded, to use the language of the ancients, as the 'mirror of the soul'.

Quite apart from interest in the eye as an indicator of the spiritual state, there has been scientific study of the eye as a guide to physical well-being. We are all familiar with the routine ophthalmological investigations carried out by a doctor. He scrutinises the retina, the inside of the eyeball, through the pupil, the opening at the front of the eye, using an instrument called an ophthalmoscope. The retina is the only place on the body where nerve endings and blood vessels may be viewed directly. The state of the retina is significant in assessing the general health and condition of the patient and is particularly revealing in cases of anaemia.

Long before the importance of retinal examination was recognised, however, another type of eye diagnosis existed: iridology, the art, or science, of diagnosing bodily conditions by studying the iris, the coloured part of the eye.

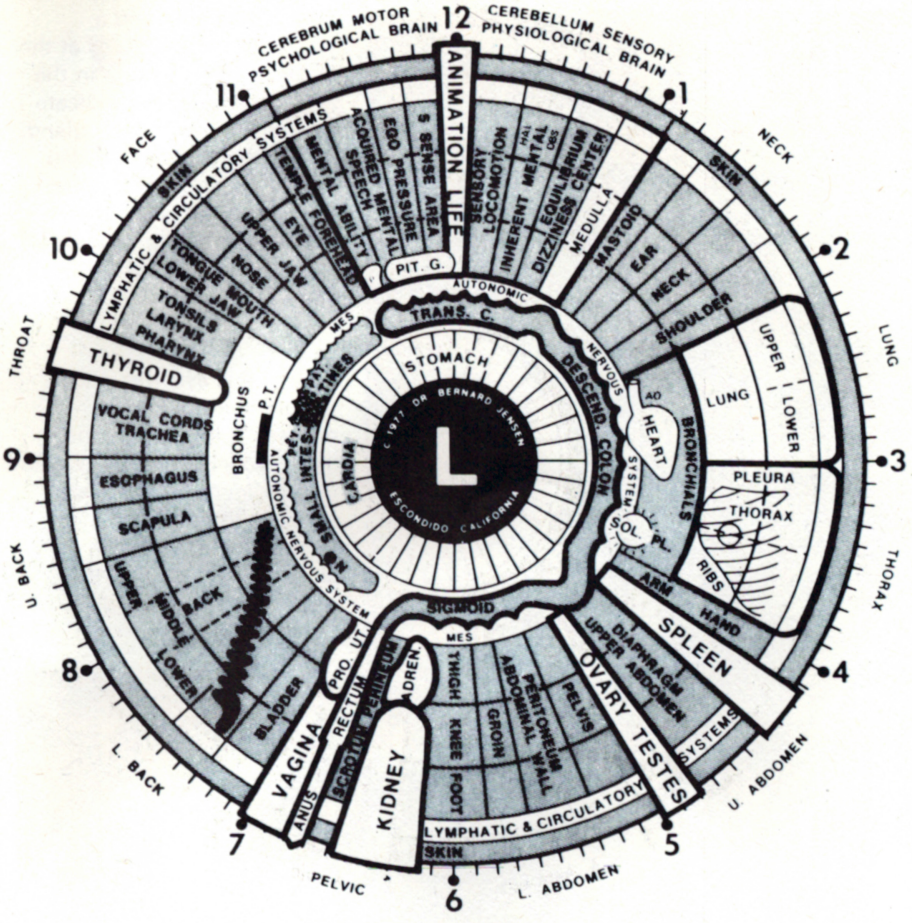
The origins and history of iris diagnosis are disputed by various writers. Claims for its use in ancient Asia and Africa are hard to substantiate, especially in view of the difficulty that the brown eyes of Asians and Africans present to the iridologist! As we know the practice of iridology today, it is a European phenomenon, dating from the middle of the 19th century.

While interest in the diagnostic value of the iris (which, incidentally, is the Latin for 'rainbow') can be credited to several persons in the 19th century, one man was outstanding in his systematic work in this field. Dr Ignatz von Peczely, a Hungarian physician, justly deserves to be known as the father of iridology. He was a man of remarkable powers of observation and original thought and demonstrated great bravery. He faced enormous opposition throughout his life, died in comparative obscurity and is only now beginning to be appreciated.

Iris diagnosis was born in von Peczely's garden in Budapest. At the age of 11 von Peczely caught a wild owl there, and in the ensuing struggle to maintain his hold on the creature, the bird's leg was broken. As the captive glared at its captor, the boy noticed a black line appear in the '6 o'clock' position in the owl's iris. Since the owl has a large iris, the boy was easily able to observe the developments in the bird's eye as the leg healed. Slowly the black line shrank and was enveloped in white lines. When the leg had fully healed, there was only an indistinct mark left in the iris. Von Peczely was to remember his acute observation throughout his life.

Having an adventurous spirit, the youth took up the highly controversial study of homoeopathy (see page 1866) and achieved such success in treating his impoverished neighbours that he attracted the enmity of the medical profession and was forbidden to continue experimenting with the technique. Feeling that he had a vocation in healing, he resolved to qualify in orthodox medicine so that he could continue his work in the respectable guise of a physician.

While he was a medical student in Vienna, von Peczely became involved with the growing revolutionary movement and was imprisoned for a short while. During this period he sought outlets for his restless



intelligence. He began studying the eyes of his fellow prisoners. Over and over again he found correlations between known medical problems and markings of the iris. He resolved to dedicate himself to a serious study of the eye when he was free.

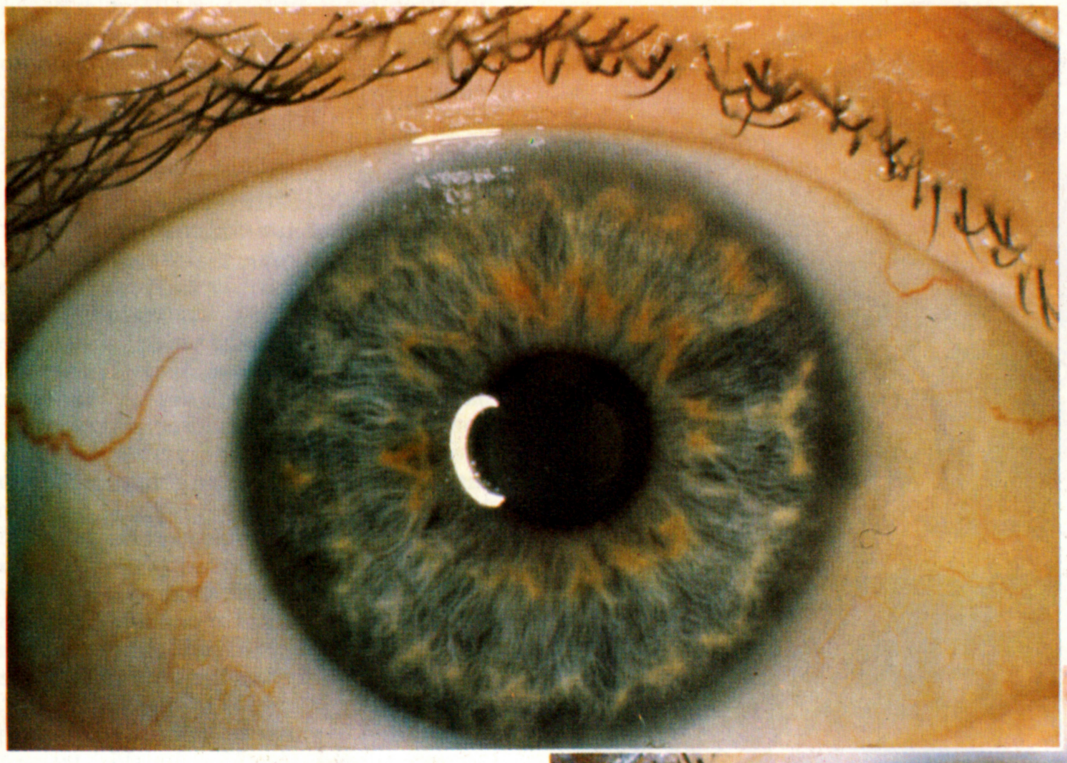
After his release, von Peczely began a systematic examination of the irises of his hospital patients. He quickly became convinced that he could demonstrate a relationship between the limbs and organs of the body and the several parts of the iris. He painstakingly mapped out his findings on an 'iris chart', essentially the same as the one that iridologists use today.

At the same time that von Peczely was working in Hungary, a Lutheran minister, Pastor Nils Liljequist, was making his own iris examinations in Sweden. Pastor Liljequist was treated for fever allopathically (that is, non-homoeopathically: with large concentrations of drugs intended to suppress the disease by creating an opposite condition). In the 19th century that meant being heavily drugged with quinine. Liljequist observed a change in the overall colour of his iris from blue to yellowish-green. This led him to study the relationship between eye colour and the use of medical drugs, especially the heavy metals, which were so commonly used by doctors then. He wrote widely circulated monographs on his findings.

Most of the medical world in Europe turned a cold shoulder to this research, perhaps snubbing iridology because of von Peczely's homoeopathic interests. Happily, this was not the case everywhere. Naturopathic workers in Germany and the United States of America 'rediscovered' the findings of von Peczely and amalgamated them with the observations of Liljequist.

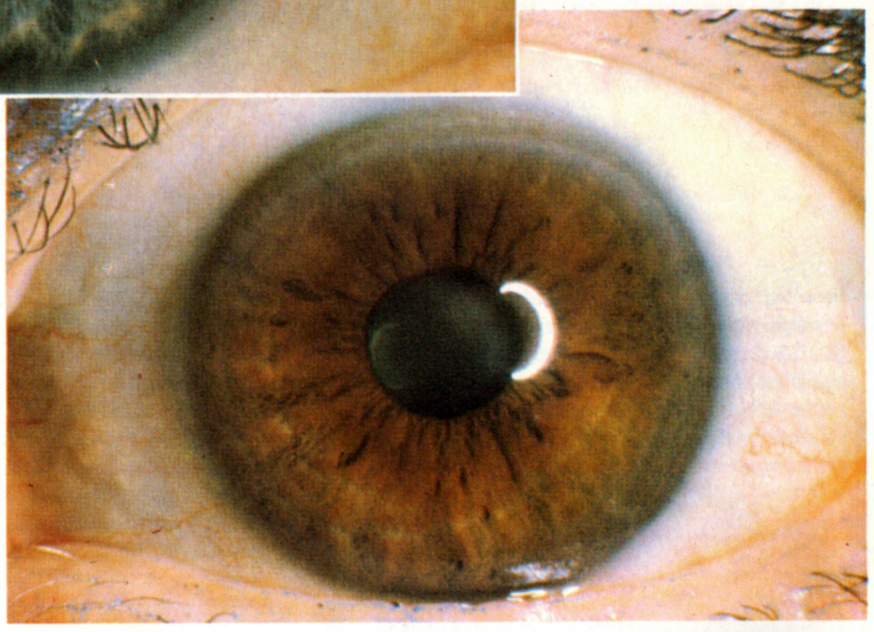
The writings of the American Henry Lindlhar in the first two decades of the 20th century make especially interesting reading. Working before iris photography was perfected, he made elaborate drawings of his own eyes as he experimented on himself with dietary changes, fasting and various medicines. He was the first to use the iris as a means of diagnosis, as iridologists use it today. He catalogued inflammations and organic dysfunctions in himself and in his patients, realising that the iris could reveal

Below: a London iridologist, John Morley, photographs a patient's eyes with a specially desighed camera. A permanent record of the appearance of the iris permits detailed analysis at leisure and enables the therapist to discern the patient's progress



Left: a dark area and a separation of the fibres at the 'two o'clock' position in the iris of this right eye indicate an underactive thyroid gland. A 'lymphatic rosary' is also visible – a circle of patches near the outer edge of the iris, indicating congestion of the lymphatic system

Below: this eye was once blue. The iridologist's analysis is that toxins that have accumulated in the area of the digestive tract have caused the brown pigmentation. The dark 'spokes' indicate that the poisons have affected the entire body



the internal functioning of the body without the need for painful and dangerous exploratory operations. He also concluded that homoeopathic preparations bring about beneficial changes in the body without being 'trapped' in the body's tissues; and so, unlike conventional drugs, they do not leave colour traces in the iris.

During the Second World War homoeopathy and naturopathy were eclipsed in the United States. Iridology was all but forgotten. It took the exertions of an American chiropractor, Dr Bernard Jensen, to revive and re-establish this science. After vast research and the acquisition of much practical experience, he produced in 1952 the definitive work on the subject, *The science and practice of iridology*. It is a large and well-illustrated work that has been reprinted many times in response to demand.

A view of the whole

Iridological research has emphasised the fact that the human being is a whole, interrelated organism and must be viewed as such when being treated. The iris diagnostician has the entire medical state of the patient and also a great deal of the patient's medical history displayed before him when he views the patient's iris through his magnifying glass; he cannot view the patient simply as a 'bad heart' or an 'arthritic knee'. This 'holistic' attitude to the patient has especially appealed to the practitioners of the 'alternative' therapies (see page 1850). And it is perhaps this emphasis that has failed to endear iris diagnosis to the orthodox medical doctor, who is a specialist and prefers not to be distracted by the totality of body functions.

Iridology is gradually becoming more respectable, however, in the United States. Universities on the West Coast offer courses in it and one or two hospitals timidly experiment with it. In Europe iridology is growing in popularity, although only among practitioners of alternative medicine. The bodies that co-ordinate the activities of iridologists receive no official recognition.

Despite this neglect by orthodox medicine, iris diagnosis is a scientifically based, though poorly comprehended, tool. It has potential for use as an accurate, inexpensive and quick form of diagnosis that could save time, money, pain and perhaps lives. If public interest became great enough to draw the attention of the medical establishment to iridology, the right kind of research into its potential and limitations might be carried out. And then iridology would be drawn out of the realm of 'the unexplained' into the honoured position that it deserves.

Further reading

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Dorothy Hall, *Iridology*, Angus and Robertson 1980
Bernard Jensen, *Iridology simplified*, Iridologists International (Escondido) 1980
Theodor Kriege, *Fundamental basis of irisdiagnosis*, Fowler 1975

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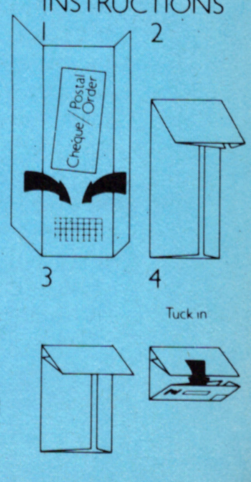

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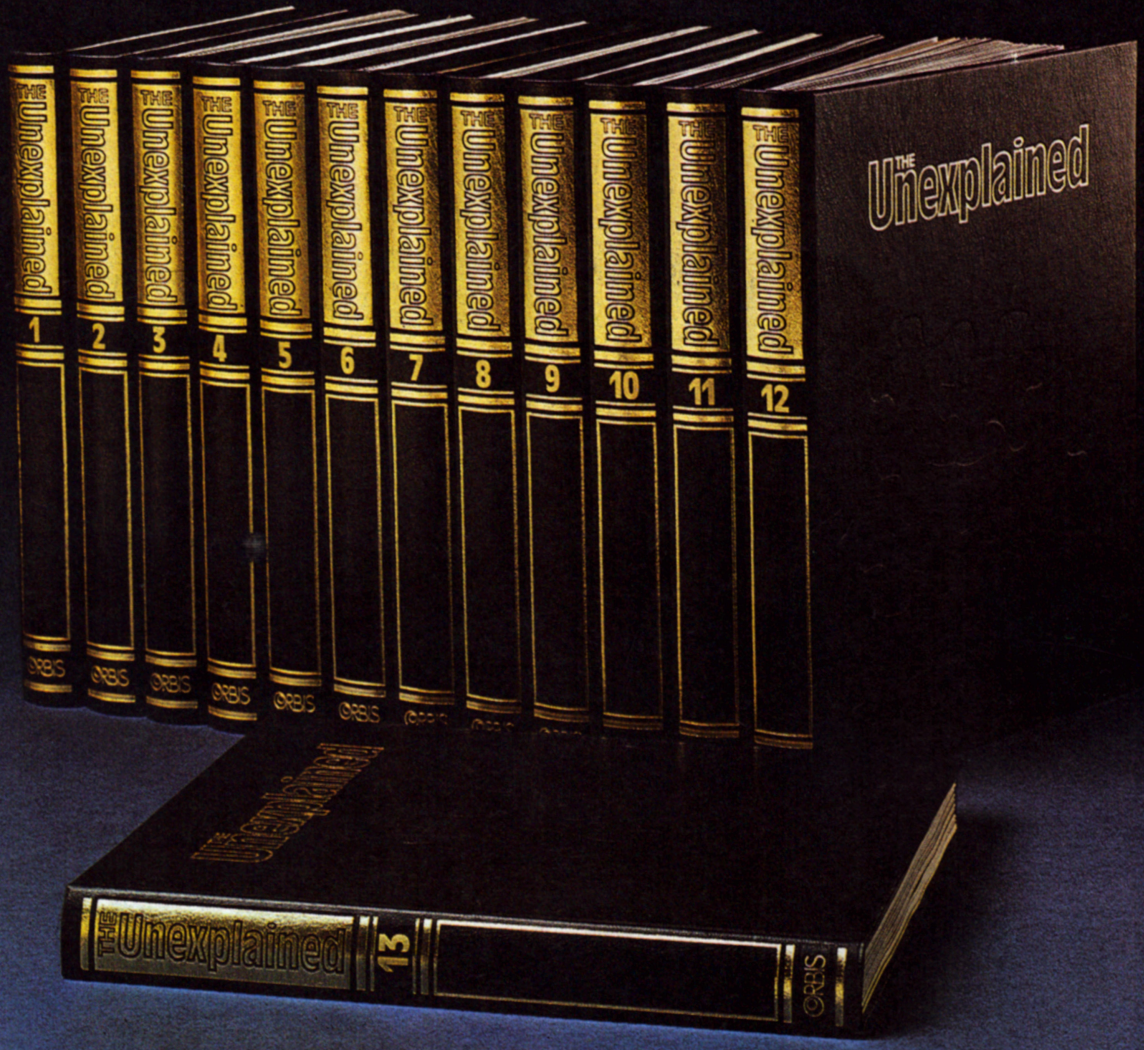

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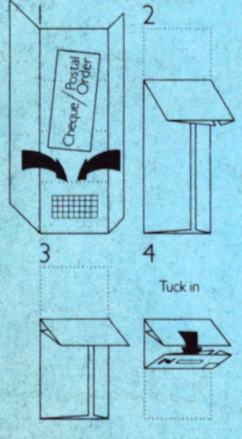

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